THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • JULY 11, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

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TAXMEN TO CHECK FREEBIES, LIQUOR BY CANDIDATES DURING ELECTIONS

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has asked tax officers to implement the Election Commission's directions on the use of freebies

TO MONITOR CANDIDATES' EXPENDITURE

The CBIC has issued a set of instructions to officials on tracking illegitimate means used by candidates to lure voters. Among other things, taxmen will monitor the distribution of coupons, free fuel and cash in poll-bound areas. They will also keep a tab on fuel consumption by candidates and parties, and closely monitor their expenditure on food, hotels, parties, tent houses, etc

INFO TO BE SHARED WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- The information will also be shared with other enforcement agencies
- The GST officers would keep an extensive check on restaurant/eateries, marriage hall/ farm houses/ slaughter house/ in the poll-bound area
- The GST and Customs officials will also set up flying squads and static surveillance teams for the effective conduct of road and transit checks

Poll-bound

RAJASTHAN, CHHATTISGARH, MADHYA PRADESH, TELANGANA AND MIZORAM

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

(From left) Locals cross a bridge over the swollen Beas in Kullu district; Armymen rescue people stuck in Patiala district; and a vehicle that fell off the Rishikesh-Srinagar highway being pulled out in Tehri | PTI

NORTH INDIA RAINS KILL 61 MORE

17 dead in Himachal Pradesh, over 300 tourists stranded in the state, property loss estimated at ₹3,000-4,000 cr

HARPREET BAJWA AND NAMITA BAJPAI @ Chandigarh/Lucknow

AT least 61 more people were reported dead across North India following incessant rains, flashfloods and lightning strikes on Monday, 34 of them in Uttar Pradesh and 17 in Himachal Pradesh, which is the worst affected state so far.

More than 300 tourists are stranded in Himachal's Lahaul-Spiti district amid snowfall. Efforts are on to rescue them. Rains hampered the clearing of massive landslides that snapped road links. The tourists have been put up in hotels and government accommodations by the local administration. Besides, tourists and locals in two state roadways buses have been stuck following a flashflood in the Pagal nullah near Sissu village in the Lahaul Valley as it blocked the Manali-Leh highway.

The initial estimate of property loss in Himachal Pradesh is around ₹3,000-4,000 crore.

The overall toll in the North included six in Haryana and four in Punjab. In UP, 17 got electrocuted due to lightning while 12 drowned. Besides, there were five other rain-related deaths in the state.

Most rivers in the North were swollen, with the Yamuna in Delhi, too, crossing the danger mark following release of water from the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Himachal Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and assured all support. The Centre deployed 39 National Disaster Response Force teams — 14 in Punjab, 12 in Himachal, eight in Uttarakhand and five in Haryana — for the rescue and relief operations.

Sukhu said efforts were underway to evacuate the stranded tourists and residents in Lahaul-Spiti and Kullu districts using helicopters whenever the weather permits.

In Himachal, five persons were killed in the Nirmand area of Kullu district while five others died in Shimla district in two different landslides. Also, the Shimla-Kalka highway was blocked near Shoghi due to a landslide. Besides, rail operations on the Shimla-Kalka rail track were suspended as landslides blocked the track.

In Punjab, floodwaters entered the Nabha Thermal Power Plant near Rajpura in Patiala forcing the shutdown of one of its 700 MW units.

2 fall from bridge, washed away in Ghataprabha

Gokak: Two persons, including a woman, were washed away after their two-wheeler skidded on an overflowing bridge and fell into the Ghataprabha River. The incident happened on the outskirts of Auradi village in Belagavi district on Monday. Search operation to trace Chenappa Harijan (38) and Durgani Harijan (35) is on.

Foxconn pulls out of semiconductor joint venture with Vedanta

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

IN a setback to the Centre's efforts to draw investment in the semiconductor sector and make India a chip-manufacturing hub, Taiwan-based electronic giant Foxconn on Monday pulled out of its joint venture with Vedanta.

The development comes in the wake of the joint venture's failure to onboard a technology partner to manufacture nano chips. According to industry sources, high cost estimates and the government's own delay in approving incentives also influenced Foxconn's decision.

The JV had initially submitted an application to manufacture 28-nanometre chips, but the government rejected it as the JV could not source a tech partner. The venture later filed an application for 40-nm chips, which is being evaluated.

Foxconn, the contract manufacturer of Apple's iPhones, and Anil Agarwal's Vedanta last year announced ₹1.6 lakh crore investment to set up semiconductor and display production plants in Gujarat. They formed a joint venture with Vedanta holding 60% stake and Foxconn the rest. Last week, Vedanta took full ownership of the JV.

"Foxconn is working to remove the Foxconn name from what now is a fully-owned entity of Vedanta," a Foxconn statement read. The company, though, maintained that it will continue to support India's Make-In-India ambitions.

Meanwhile, Vedanta claimed it has lined up other partners. "We will continue to grow our semiconductor team, and we have the licence for production-grade technology for 40 nm from a prominent integrated device manufacturer," said a Vedanta spokesperson, adding that the company will shortly acquire a licence for production-grade 28 nm as well.

Meanwhile, the government said the pullout won't impact India's semiconductor journey. Telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said both the firms remain committed to India's semiconductor mission and make in India programme.

It is well known that both companies have no prior semiconductor experience or technology and were expected to source fab technology from tech partners

—Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MoS, Electronics and IT

Reading down 370 gave J&K peace, prosperity, progress, govt tells SC

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

OPPOSING a batch of pleas challenging the reading down Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019, which had granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, the Centre on Monday told the Supreme Court that the step had brought unprecedented development, progress, security and stability to the region, which was missing during the old Article 370 regime.

A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court will on Tuesday begin its hearing on the matter.

"After the historic changes, the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have witnessed profound ameliorative, affirmative and progressive changes in last four years encompassing its entire governance — including the developmental activities, public administration and security matters which has positively impacted every resident irrespective of caste, creed or religion," the affidavit stated.

The entire region since 2019 has witnessed peace, progress and prosperity, it claimed, adding life has returned to normalcy after over three decades of turmoil. "Schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and other public institutions are functioning efficiently without any strikes or any kind of disturbances during the last three years."

It further claimed that organised stone pelting incidents, which were as high as 1,767 in 2018, came down to zero so far this year. "Resolute anti-terror actions have resulted in dismantling of the terror eco-system which is reflected in a significant drop in terrorist recruitment from 199 in the year 2018 to 12 in the year 2023 till date," the affidavit states.

Referring to the G-20 meeting in Srinagar in May, the Centre described it as a watershed event, saying it showed how the region could be converted into one where even international dignitaries could be invited and global events held.

Grassroots democracy

The Centre's affidavit said major steps have been taken to strengthen grassroots democracy in J&K like establishing a three-tier panchayati raj system there

Parameshwara rules out CBI probe into Jain monk's murder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru/Hubballi

HOME Minister G Parameshwara on Monday ruled out a CBI probe into the murder of Jain monk Kamkumar Nandi Maharaj of Nandi Parvat Ashram in Belagavi district.

The state police are capable of investigating the case and they have already arrested the accused, Dr Parameshwara told reporters in Hubballi.

He said there is no question of shielding anybody. A thorough investigation will be conducted.

Dr Parameshwara visited Jain monk Gunadhar Nandi Maharaj of Varur Navagraha Teerthakshetra, who had launched a hunger strike seeking protection for Jain monks. The monk withdrew his protest after the home minister promised security to Jain monks and stringent action against those involved in the case. The government will issue a notification on providing security to the monks soon, he added.

Meanwhile, in the legislative Assembly and Council, Opposition BJP legislators demanded that the government recommend a CBI probe into the case. Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai alleged that law and order situation in the state is deteriorating fast.

Besides Bommai, leaders Abhay Kumar Patil, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, Siddu Savadi, Sunil Kumar, Shashikal Jolle and Araga Jnanendra raised the issue during 'Zero Hour'.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Police have taken action within the purview of law. Instead of giving a political colour to such incidents, leaders in responsible positions should assist the government in unearthing the truth

6 Parameshwara, Home Minister

Centre likely to exempt tribals from UCC ambit

NEW DELHI: Under pressure from tribal communities from various parts of India including the northeastern states, the Centre is likely to exclude indigenous groups from the ambit of the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC). A highly placed source told this newspaper that the customs and traditions of the tribal communities, which are protected under the Constitution, will not be taken away under the UCC that the government proposes to bring in.

The development comes on the heels of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's meeting with a 12-member Naga delegation last week. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, who led the delegation, said Shah assured them that the Law Commission is considering excluding the Christian community and some tribals from the legislation.

—*Preetha Nair*

Anna Bhagya: Siddu, DKS launch online cash transfer

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state government launched cash transfer under its ambitious Anna Bhagya scheme on Monday.

The government is giving Rs 170 per month for each beneficiary along with 5kg rice. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar launched the scheme symbolically by transfering money online to beneficiaries' bank accounts. "From Tuesday, cash will be transferred to beneficiaries across the state. Money will be sent through DBT to all beneficiaries," the CM said.

Anna Bhagya is not a new scheme. "It was launched in 2013. We had stated the same in our manifesto then. Soon after assuming power, we announced Anna Bhagya," he said. P6

SHOW STEALERS

Lambani women perform in Hampi during the inaugural of the 3rd G20 Culture Working Group meeting on Monday. The meeting, under India's G20 presidency, will conclude on July 12 | KPN | P5

Kasturirangan's condition stable

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FORMER ISRO chairman and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr K Kasturirangan, who suffered a heart attack while he was in Sri Lanka on Sunday night, was airlifted to Bengaluru and admitted to Narayana Health on Monday night. The flight from Colombo landed at HAL Airport and he was rushed to Narayana Health amid high security. Sources at Narayana Health said Kasturirangan is being treated by cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty and his team. The 83-year-old scientist's condition is said to be stable.

CM Siddaramaiah tweeted, "Sad to know that Indian Space Scientist Shri Kasturirangan has suffered a heart attack in Sri Lanka. I wish him a speedy recovery."

Mangalurean to spend ₹50L to relocate building

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

A 25-year-old commercial complex here is being lifted and moved to a new place at a cost of Rs 50 lakh! Part of the two-storied complex of G Rajesh Pai at Gurupura-Kaikamba near Mangaluru was marked for demolition to widen NH 169 between Mangaluru and Karkala some time ago.

Work on shifting the complex 130 feet away from its present location is on. Around 6,000 sqft area of the complex was marked for demolition. The complex could have been saved by cutting this area. But if this is done, there will be no space for parking vehicles. Moreover, Pai was reluctant to cut the front portion of the complex because of his attachment with it.

"Sri Sudheendra Thirtha Swami, whom I revere a lot, inaugurated the complex in 1999. The seer told me that nothing will happen to the building, and his words sounded cryptic to me then," Pai said.

He said that he learnt about the technology to shift buildings after meeting some civil engineers. He also visited Koppal, Siraguppa and Mangaluru to hear from building owners who had done it.

The building near Mangaluru which is being shifted to a new location | EXPRESS

"Finally, I gathered courage and decided to save my building. Construction of a similar building would cost me more than Rs 1 crore. Whereas to shift it, I would be spending Rs 50 lakh," Pai said.

The shifting work started a week ago and it will take at least three months for the building's relocation.

Vishal Rana, a civil engineer with Haryana-based HSBL Building Solutions Pvt Ltd, which is carrying out the task, said the building will be lifted for about two feet using jacks and then moved to the new location using rail tracks placed underneath it. At the new location, a foundation will be built afresh to place the old structure on it.

Boy trapped on 10th floor balcony rescued

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

AN eight-year-old special child, who jumped from the balcony of the 11th floor of an apartment and got stuck on the safety grill on the 10th floor, was rescued by personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services Department here on Monday.

Aarush, the boy, was saved after an hour-long rescue operation at the apartment in Brahmagiri.

Sathish N, fire station officer, told TNIE that his team members used a hydraulic cutter to cut open the iron safety grill on the 10th floor to reach the boy at the window panel.

He said the department received a distress call around 11.40 am and its personnel rushed to Brahmagiri. On reaching the spot, the team members learnt that the boy, who resides on the 11th floor flat, had locked his bedroom and through the balcony he jumped down. A neighbour, who noticed the boy on the safety grill, alerted the boy's parents.

EXPRESS READ

Vehicle carrying tomatoes worth ₹1.5 lakh stolen

Bengaluru: A vehicle carrying 210 trays of tomatoes, estimated to cost around ₹1.5 lakh, was stolen in Bengaluru on Saturday night. The incident happened when the driver and his friend went to a shop to have tea. P3